

SYN. NO. _____

AGN. NO. _____

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS YAROSLAVSKY AND MOLINA

June 20, 2005

Homeless Count

In January 2005, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) conducted a Homeless Count of Los Angeles County, which included an actual street count of homeless individuals and families. Last Thursday, LAHSA released the Homeless Count numbers. There are 91,000 homeless individuals on a given night in Los Angeles County. There are approximately 35,000 chronically homeless individuals and more than 7500 family units.

24-hour, Year-Round Emergency Shelters

There are only 5,240 emergency shelter beds for these 91,000 homeless individuals. The County has allocated on-going funds to operate 24-hour year round shelters and has just received a report from our consultant with recommendations for developing such shelters. The County should allocate capital funds to build or rehabilitate buildings for emergency shelters.

Homeless Families

It is generally not appropriate to mix families and single adults in homeless shelters. Families have unique needs and require a unique emergency shelter setting.

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In 2002 LAHSA selected Women's Care Cottage through an RFP process to develop and operate a 24-hour Respite Center for homeless families and to serve as a prototype for an emergency shelter with short-term intensive case management. Additionally, Booth Memorial Center opened an emergency shelter for families in 2004 to address the crisis of homeless families sleeping in the parking lot of a shelter on Skid Row. Although the Department of Public Social Services has made tremendous progress in addressing the needs of homeless families, the County can and should do much more to support emergency shelters for families and to assist families in obtaining permanent housing.

LAHSA

LAHSA is a joint powers authority comprised of the City and County of Los Angeles. It was established over a decade ago in settlement of a lawsuit between the City and County over jurisdictional responsibility for the growing homeless problem. LAHSA's primary function is to coordinate and oversee the distribution of state and federal grant funds received in support of homeless services. LAHSA also provides some direct services to the homeless.

Both the City and the County operate many programs that impact on homelessness. This includes low-income and supportive housing as well as health, mental health, substance abuse, welfare and rental assistance programs. Homelessness is also impacted by the discharge of individuals from county institutions including jails, foster care, and psychiatric wards. The County has come to recognize that it can impact homelessness not only by spending grant funds but by improving the

way it administers its core functions.

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The County and City are currently engaged in an effort to end homelessness in 10 years known as “Bring LA Home.” Bring LA Home includes leaders and representatives from both agencies as well as the business, advocacy, academic, non-profit, and faith-based communities in a broad-based campaign to find permanent, structural solutions to the homeless problem. Bring LA Home is focused initially on chronically homeless people, homeless families and the improvement of service delivery by the County so as to prevent and ameliorate homelessness.

As currently structured, LAHSA is not designed or funded to implement the ten-year plan to end homelessness. We believe the time has come for the County to approach the City and jointly explore options for re-envisioning LAHSA to more actively attack the homeless problem. This could include a more robust program, policy and planning unit as well as active coordination with appropriate City and County agencies. In addition, we should evaluate how LAHSA’s governance structure can be made more accountable to the County and how the County can become more involved with LAHSA.

The County spends a significant amount of money containing homeless issues. The Sheriff’s Department alone estimates that it spends more than \$32 million a year on the incarceration of homeless individuals. It is time for the County to be aggressive and strategic and to begin solving, not just managing, the homeless problem.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Administrative Officer to appropriate the following funds from the Designation for Capital

Projects and Extraordinary Maintenance:

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1. \$20 million for construction and/or renovation of year-round emergency shelters.

Specific distribution amounts will be determined by the Board after receiving the recommendation of LAHSA and the CAO.

2. \$2 million for construction of a Respite Center for homeless families, to be operated by Women's Care Cottage; and appropriate out of Provisional Financing Uses (PFU) \$200,000 in on-going operating funds for the Respite Center;

3. \$600,000 in one-time funds for Booth Memorial Center to operate its shelter for homeless families during 2005-06.

WE FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief

Administrative Officer to:

1. a. Work with the Auditor Controller, County Counsel, Community Development Commission and the City of Los Angeles to develop options for more effective administration of homeless services and programs in Los Angeles County, including funding strategies and governance structures; and present these options to the Board in 60 days;
1. b. Appropriate \$2 million from the Provisional Financing Uses (PFU) in order to adequately fund the on-going administration of these homeless services in Los Angeles County.

2. In collaboration with the Community Development Commission, research and evaluate dedicated revenue sources for homeless programs such as rental assistance, outreach, and operating expenses for supportive and transitional housing and emergency shelters, and report to the Board in 90 days.

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